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VIII. — *A Papyrus Describing Magical Powers*

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AMONG the Fayum papyri acquired by the University of Michigan in 1920 there is a small piece, numbered 5 in the inventory, which attracted attention at once because of the peculiar character of its contents. No value can be assigned to it on grounds of literary merit; but the question of its relations to previously known literature proved to be a matter of some interest.

The papyrus is written on one side only, and is evidently a single page from a roll. Its present size is about 16.2 cm. by 8.5 cm. A considerable upper margin is preserved. The lower has been broken away, probably taking with it some lines of writing. Twenty-two lines are well preserved, the twenty-third is broken in the middle, and of the twenty-fourth only a few letters are intact. The page has been broken longitudinally into two nearly equal parts, and some letters, mostly easily supplied, have been lost along the line of fracture. There is a margin at the right, so that the ends of the lines are preserved. The margin at the left is gone, but the beginnings of the lines are only slightly encroached upon, from line 19 down. The surface of the papyrus is somewhat eroded, but the reading is not often rendered doubtful for that reason.

The hand is a small semi-uncial, not particularly well-formed, but clear enough in the main. Some ligatures occur. The approach to the cursive is most notable in *χρησασθαι* at the end of l. 17, and *σου* in l. 18. Mr. Hunt, of the British Museum, who gave it a cursory examination, thought that the writing was of the second or the third century of our era. Various minor indications lead me to think that the earlier date is to be preferred.

The text follows :

στήσεται κὰν σελήνη κε  
 λεύσω καταβήσεται κὰν  
 κυλῶσαι θελ[ή]σω τὴν ἡμέ  
 ραν ἢ νύξ μοι μένει κὰν  
 5 δεηθῶμεν πάλιν ἡμέ  
 ρας τὸ φῶς οὐκ ἀπελεύσε  
 ται κὰν πλεῦσαι θελήσω  
 τὴν θάλατταν οὐ δέομαι  
 νεὼς κὰν δι' ἄερος ἐλθεῖν  
 10 κουφισθήσομ[α]ι ἐρωτικὸν  
 μόνον οὐχ εὐρίσκω φάρ  
 μακον οὐ ποιῆσαι δυνάμε  
 νον οὐ παῦσαι δυνάμενον  
 ἢ γῆ γὰρ φοβουμένη τὸν  
 15 θεὸν οὐ φέρει εἰ δέ τις ἔχει  
 καὶ δίδωσι λερω δέομαι  
 δότε πιεῖν θέλω χρήσασθαι  
 θέλω φαίνεσθαί σου τῇ θυ  
 γατρὶ καλὸν εἶδωλον λέ  
 20 γεις καὶ τοῦτό σ[ο]ι παράδο  
 ξον εἶναι δοκεῖ πόσοι δὲ  
 ἄλλοι παρ' ἀλόγων ρα ἡ  
 ]ν σωμαίων [ ]νι ο  
 ] .. ερω[ ] μ[

Dots under letters indicate that they are broken or indistinct; dots under vacant spaces indicate that a corresponding number of letters has been lost leaving no satisfactory traces. Letters in brackets have been lost leaving virtually no traces, but are easily restored from the context. At the bottom of the page brackets roughly indicate the outlines of the laceration.

There are no accents in the papyrus, and in the single case where it could have been used (l. 18) iota adscript does not appear. Spaces have been used in the text above merely for the reader's convenience; such slight divisions as occur between the words in the papyrus have no relation to the sense of the clauses.

Two errors in the text should be mentioned. In l. 1, *σελήνη* should be *σελήνην*, an error of a kind common in papyri of this period. In l. 3, *κυλῶσαι* should apparently be *κωλύσαι*, though if *κωλύσαι* be right we have here a use of the verb which is not easily paralleled. A correspondent's suggestion *κολούσαι* will probably occur to others; and it is true that the two words are confused in manuscripts of later centuries, as Wyttenbach showed in a note on Plutarch's *Moralia*, 69 E (*Animadv.* vi, 524). But on the whole it seems more likely that *κωλύσαι τὴν ἡμέραν*, 'hinder the day', that is, hinder the coming of the day, may be regarded as a fairly natural, though uncommon, development — 'hinder, impede' becoming 'retard, defer.' Besides, *κολούσαι* would be more appropriate where the context called for the notion of hastening the end of the day rather than that of delaying its beginning. Peculiar also is *οὐ ποιῆσαι δυνάμενον οὐ παῦσαι δυνάμενον* (l. 12 f), where *οὔτε* — *οὔτε* might be expected; but the text is certain.

In l. 16, before *δέομαι*, a word is uncertain. It ended in *ω*, before which went a letter that projected below the line. There are three such in this papyrus — *ι*, *ρ*, *φ*. Before this downward projecting letter is a fairly clear portion of an *ε* (the letter was almost certainly rounded, so *ι* is unlikely); then traces which correspond best to *λ*, (though *δ* is possible, *α* less likely), and before that again a space sufficient for one or two letters, in which no traces of ink are now visible. There are slight depressions in the surface of the papyrus, but it is very doubtful whether they correspond to the ductus litterarum. Possibly *ἀλλ' ἐρῶ* is the reading, in which case *ἐρῶ* is parenthetical and *ἀλλ'* is to be taken with the request

or command, as in Tyrtæus, 10, 15, ὦ νέοι, ἀλλὰ μάχεσθε, Plato, *Phaedr.* 228 D, ἀλλ' ἴθι, δείκνυε; *Phaedo*, 117 A, ἀλλ' ἴθι, ἔφη, πείθου κτλ.; Rep. 327 B, ἀλλὰ περιμένετε, and many other places. But in any case ἀλλ' must remain dubious; and if it is right the first two letters must have been slightly crowded.

In l. 19 one is inclined at first reading to take καλὸν εἶδωλον with the foregoing φαίνεσθαι; but in view of the following clause this seems impossible. καλὸν εἶδωλον begins a new sentence, I think, the two words being in direct quotation with λέγεις. In l. 22 the text has παραλογων without division. I read it as two words in the belief that παρ' ἀλόγων σωμάτων went as an expression of source or agency with an aorist passive standing between the last two words. ἡράσθησαν would suit the space and the remaining letters, and, for the sense, one might refer to such a situation as occurs in Lucian's *Asinus*; but in view of the lack of clear connection with the foregoing sentences it seems better not to incumber the text with an uncertain restoration.

We may now translate: . . . 'it will stand still (*sc.* the sun); and if I command the moon, it will come down; and if I wish to delay the day, the night stays for me; and if again we need the day, the light will not go away. And if I wish to sail the sea, I do not need a ship; and if I wish to go through the air, I shall be made light. A love charm alone I do not find, either one able to cause love or one able to allay it; for the earth, fearing the god, does not produce it. But if anybody has it and gives it, I shall say "I beg you give it me to drink; I wish to use it — I wish that it appear to thy daughter." "A pretty phantasy," you say, and this seems to you an unheard-of thing; but how many others from (or by) brute bodies'. . . .

The phrase φαίνεσθαί σου τῇ θυγατρὶ causes some difficulty. There is nothing strange in the circumstance that the magically-skilled speaker is a woman; but why does she refer to herself as "thy daughter"? It may be that in ap-

pealing to the unknown holder of the love charm which she herself can not find, she uses the language of an apprentice to a master or mistress. But both Dieterich (*Eine Mithrasliturgie*, 52, 146 ff., 151) and Reitzenstein (*Hellenist. Mysterienreligionen*, 27, 105) have shown that the word 'father' is used in the mystery religions of a teacher or adept in relation to a novice; and this analogy is probably most in point. In a Berlin magical papyrus<sup>1</sup> there is a passage which directs that a particularly powerful charm be revealed only to the operator's own son — as if to the exclusion of an apprentice or son according to the mystic craft.

Unquestionably the speaker in our papyrus is describing magical powers in the opening sentences. But this is certainly not a magical papyrus in the technical sense, as the phrase is used, for example, to describe the great magical books of the British Museum, or of Berlin, Paris, and Leyden. Those papyri consist in the main of charms and invocations to secure the help of gods or daemons, and of miscellaneous recipes — the last usually expressed by the second person imperatives and futures. Passages in the first person occur chiefly when the operator identifies himself mystically with the god in order to compel lesser daemons to do his will.

There are, to be sure, some close verbal correspondences between the first lines of this papyrus and certain passages in the magical books above mentioned. So in the Berlin magical papyrus mentioned above (l. 117 ff.)<sup>2</sup> there is the following description of the powers with which the *δαίμων πάρεδρος*, or familiar spirit, can endow the operator who controls him: "He changes you into the form of any animal that you wish. . . . He will lift you into the air and again cast you into the billows of the sea currents. . . . He will quickly freeze the rivers and the sea so that you can run upon them as many furlongs as you will . . . (a gap in the text follows, then an

<sup>1</sup> The first of the two papyri published in *Abh. Berl. Akad.* 1865; see p. 125, l. 193.

<sup>2</sup> *Abh. Berl. Akad.* 1865, p. 123.

imperfect sentence, then the clause) when you wish to draw down the stars."

So also in the great magical papyrus of Paris<sup>3</sup> the operator is instructed thus: "Draw breath from the rays, inhaling three times, as deeply as you can, and you will see yourself lifted up (*ἀνακουφίζόμενον*) and passing over into the upper regions so that you think that you are in the midst of the air. . . ."

Again, in the Leyden papyrus I there is a sort of chanted prelude (*ἀρχή*) beginning "Open are the gates of heaven, open are the gates of the earth, open is the road of the sea, open is the road of the rivers."<sup>4</sup> In both of the Leyden papyri there is mention of a sacred name which will cause rivers or the sea to be frozen or to turn to stone.<sup>5</sup> One of these passages, from *Pap. Leid. J*, has another phrase (*ὁ ἥλιος στήσεται*) which recalls the language of our papyrus. In *J* again there is a charm in which the operator is directed to say, as in the person of a divinity, "I am he who hath his abiding-place in the heaven and goeth to and fro in water and fire and earth and air."<sup>6</sup>

There are also literary texts which show that powers of the sort described in our papyrus were the regular stock in trade of the magician. In Lucian's *Philopseudes*, 13 the credulous Cleodemus claims to have seen a magician from the land of the Hyperboreans fly through the air, walk on water and through fire, call up the dead, draw down the moon from heaven, and work effective love charms. Flying is mentioned also in *Asinus*, 4.

Perhaps if both form and substance be considered, the closest parallel to the opening lines of the papyrus is to be found in the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitiones*, II, 9, where

<sup>3</sup> Lines 537 ff. (Wessely in *Denkschr. Wien. Akad.* 1888, p. 58). The text given here is that of Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Pap. Leid. I*, 384; here from Dieterich's edition in *Jahrb. f. class. Phil.* Suppl. xvi, 812.

<sup>5</sup> *Pap. Leid. I*, 384 (Dieterich, *op. cit.* 808); *Pap. Leid. J* (*ib.* 775).

<sup>6</sup> In Dieterich, *Abraxas*, p. 190, 13 ff.

Simon Magus says of himself, "I can make myself invisible to those who would seize me, and again, if I wish to be seen, I can appear before them. If I should wish to flee, I would bore through mountains and pass through rocks as if they were clay. If I should hurl myself from a high mountain, I should be brought to earth unharmed, as if borne up. If I be bound, I will loose myself, and those who fettered me I will lay in bonds; if confined in prison, I will make the doors open of themselves. I will animate statues, so that those who behold them will suppose them to be living men. I will make new trees spring up at once and cause thickets to grow up suddenly. I will throw myself into the fire and I shall not be burned. I change my countenance so as not to be recognized; nay I can show to men that I have two faces. I will turn myself into a ewe or a she-goat. I will cause beards to grow on the faces of little boys. I will fly up into the air, I will produce gold in great quantities, I will make kings and cast them down."

Similar boasts occur elsewhere in the pseudo-Clementine literature. The attempted flight and the fall of Simon Magus, well known in pious legend, are described by Arnobius, II, 12, and in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*.<sup>7</sup>

With these passages before us, it might seem natural to classify our papyrus as a fragment of what Reitzenstein (*Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*, 7 ff.) called aretalogy — an account of wondrous powers exerted by a god, a hero, or a miracle worker. It can hardly be an aretalogy in ordinary narrative form, on account of the use of the first person, nor is it safe to call it a dialogue comparable to portions of the *Recognitiones*; for the objection *καλὸν εἶδωλον, λέγεις κτλ.* is anticipated and stated by the first speaker, the sorceress, not by an interlocutor. One might think of this piece as an essay or lecture; but there is, I think, an objection to this view also. The difficulty lies in the fact that the wonder

<sup>7</sup> *Actus Petri cum Simone*, 4. 31. 32; *Martyrium Petri*, 2. 3; *Martyrium Petri et Pauli*, 30. 51-56.



worker acknowledges that her power is limited in an important respect — she can not find a love charm — and such limitations are not in the manner of a serious and believing work. It seems to me more likely that we have here a page from a work of fiction, perhaps a romance. We may suppose that in this episode one of the characters, a sorceress, describes her powers and admits their limitations — limitations which may have had calculated consequences in the further development of the unknown plot.

The text here described will eventually be incorporated in a volume devoted to the University of Michigan collection of papyri. With a view to this later rehandling of the matter, I shall be grateful for any suggestions, whether tending to support or to correct the interpretations offered in this paper.